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POLITICAL REALIGNMENTS IN EUROPE

by

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INTRODUCTION

THE revolution which has taken place in Germany since January 30, 1933, when Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor, has not only crystallized tendencies which had been at work in Europe during the post-war years, but has precipitated new developments which may eventually lead to a fundamental readjustment of European diplomatic alignments. Thus France, alarmed by German nationalism, is seeking closer relations with the Soviet Union, until recently one of Germany's staunchest post-war friends, and with Italy, which supports the German demand for treaty revision. Germany, meanwhile, is attempting to create a Fascist and revisionist bloc with the aid of Italy, which appears destined to occupy a key position in European diplomatic negotiations. The Little Entente states—Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia—fearing that Hitler's victory may result in territorial changes at their expense, have tightened their mutual bonds and invited Poland's collaboration in their campaign against treaty revision. Finally Great Britain, reluctant to assume additional responsibility for the protection of France and its Eastern European allies against aggression by the defeated powers, has attempted, in concert with Italy, to work out a formula which would achieve Franco-German reconciliation and the eventual pacification of Europe, without which all hopes of military and economic disarmament are doomed to failure.

The ferment which today marks European relations is due both to growing dissatisfaction with the terms of the settlement reached at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, and to fear on the part of the victors that the vanquished may attempt to revise this settlement by force. It will be recalled that the peace treaties imposed heavy territorial, military and economic sacrifices on Germany and its allies—Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey. The terms of the peace treaties were dictated not only by the belief that the militarism of Germany and its allies was a menace to world peace and that the defeated powers should be prevented from resorting to aggression in the future; they were dic-

tated also by the desire to create a basis for permanent peace, by the conviction that all national groups should be given an opportunity for "self-determination," and by the hope that, out of the ruins of the World War, would arise an international organization in which all states would cooperate on an equal basis, and in which they could adjust their differences by peaceful means.

These ideals, which found their fullest expression in the Covenant of the League of Nations, incorporated in each of the peace treaties, have in many respects fallen far short of realization. The peace settlement created a profound resentment in the defeated countries, which has grown more bitter with the years, and has culminated in such intensely nationalist movements as German Hitlerism. The political frontiers traced in the name of "self-determination of nations" failed, in many cases, to take ethnic and economic interests into consideration, and left, in several of the victorious states, considerable national minorities which seek reunion with the defeated countries—notably the Germans in Poland and Czechoslovakia, and the Hungarians in Rumania. Parallel with these new frontiers have risen new tariff walls, which have seriously hampered all efforts at post-war economic reconstruction. The burden of reparation and war debts has weighed heavily on both victors and vanquished. The failure of the Disarmament Conference to achieve concrete results has increased the restlessness of the defeated powers, which demand arms equality—a demand which, if carried out in practice, would probably involve re-armament of Germany and its former allies. Nor have the international institutions established by the peace treaties—the League of Nations and the Permanent Court of International Justice—succeeded as yet in solving the major political and economic problems created by the peace settlement.

While no attempt has been made since 1919 to reconsider the peace settlement as a whole, many of its provisions have been abandoned or gradually modified. Great Britain and France completed the evacuation

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of the Rhineland in 1930, five years before the time appointed by the Versailles Treaty. The reparations imposed on Austria, Bulgaria and Hungary were substantially reduced at the Hague Conference of 1930,¹ and Germany's reparation obligations, scaled down by the Dawes and Young Plans, were practically wiped out at the Lausanne Reparation Conference of 1932.² Finally, on December 11, 1932, Great Britain, France, Italy

and the United States recognized Germany's right to arms equality.³ These various modifications, however, have left untouched the crucial question of territorial revision which now divides Europe into two camps: that of the revisionist powers—Germany, Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria, supported by Italy—and that of the powers which demand preservation of the territorial *status quo*—France, Poland and the Little Entente.

FRANCE AND THE STATUS QUO

France's foreign policy since the World War has been dominated by the desire to achieve security, which to all French statesmen, from Poincaré to Herriot, has meant security against forcible overthrow of the territorial arrangements established by the peace treaties; according to predominant French opinion, security must precede disarmament and treaty revision. France first hoped to attain security by two identical treaties of guarantee which it concluded on June 28, 1919 with Great Britain and the United States. By the terms of these treaties, Great Britain and the United States undertook, respectively, to come to France's assistance in case of unprovoked aggression by Germany. The United States, however, failed to ratify the Franco-American treaty, and the Franco-British agreement, contingent on American participation in the proposed guarantees, was consequently voided.

Disappointed by the reluctance of Great Britain and the United States to guarantee the European *status quo*, France next sought the friendship of states which either owed their existence to the peace settlement—Poland and Czechoslovakia—or had acquired substantial territory in 1919—Belgium, Rumania and Yugoslavia. On September 7, 1920 France concluded a military alliance with Belgium, which provided that each signatory should come to the aid of the other in case of attack by Germany. A similar provision was contained in the Franco-Polish treaty of February 19, 1921, by which the two countries undertook to consult each other on all international matters of mutual interest and to act in concert for the maintenance of all treaties to which they were or might become parties. In September 1922, moreover, France and Poland concluded a military convention, which was renewed in 1932 for another period of ten years. France has also made loans to Poland, and has furnished it with military instructors and war material.

In a further effort to achieve security France, on January 25, 1924, concluded a treaty with Czechoslovakia, by which the two states agreed to consult each other if Germany and Austria attempted to unite, or if Germany or Hungary attempted to restore monarchy, and to "concert upon" common measures whenever their security or the peace treaties were at stake. On June 10, 1926 France concluded an agreement with Rumania, by which the two countries undertook never to attack each other except in legitimate self-defense or in accordance with a decision of the League of Nations, and to submit all disputes to arbitration. They agreed, moreover, to act together in forestalling all attempts to change the European *status quo*, and to consult each other regarding action to be taken in case either were attacked without provocation. A similar treaty was signed by France and Yugoslavia on November 11, 1927. As in the case of Poland, these treaties were accompanied by French financial and military assistance to Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia.⁴ France's loans to its Eastern European allies have, in recent years, been made for the most part through the armament manufacturing interests of Schneider-Creusot, which have also supplied these countries with war material.

Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia had meanwhile formed a group known as the Little Entente by concluding three bilateral treaties—Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia on August 14, 1920, Czechoslovakia and Rumania on April 23, 1921, Rumania and Yugoslavia on June 7, 1921. The purpose of these agreements was to maintain the territorial arrangements of the Trianon treaty, to prevent restoration of the Hapsburgs, and to protect each of the signatories against unprovoked attack by Hungary and, in the case of the Rumanian-Yugoslav agreement, against attack by Bulgaria as well. Rumania, moreover, concluded a treaty of alliance with Poland on March 3, 1921, and Polish-Czechoslovak relations have steadily improved since 1924.

The financial and military resources of

1. Cf. Harry D. Gideonse, "The Reparation Settlement of 1930," *Foreign Policy Association, Information Service*, Vol. VI, No. 5, May 14, 1930.

2. Cf. Mildred S. Wertheimer, "The Lausanne Reparation Settlement," *Foreign Policy Reports*, Vol. VIII, No. 19, November 23, 1932.

3. Cf. William T. Stone, "The World Disarmament Conference: Second Stage," *Foreign Policy Reports*, Vol. VIII, No. 23, January 18, 1933.

4. For a detailed list of French loans to Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia, cf. John C. de Wilde, "French Financial Policy," *Foreign Policy Reports*, Vol. VIII, No. 20, December 7, 1932, p. 236.

France form the keystone of the system of alliances built up by the *status quo* powers. It has recently been estimated that, in a conflict between revisionist and *status quo* states, the former—assuming that they are joined by Italy—could place in the field some nine million organized forces, at least half of which would be poorly trained and equipped with outdated weapons, while France and its allies would command a total of 11 to 12 million organized forces, for the most part well-trained and equipped with the most recent inventions in modern warfare.⁵ The *status quo* system of alliances, however, is not free from weaknesses, not the least of which is the distance which separates France from its Eastern European allies. The military effectiveness of Poland and the Little Entente states, moreover, is limited by the presence, within their borders, of powerful national minorities which might seize war as an occasion to attempt reunion with the re-

visionist powers; and at least two of France's allies—Rumania and Yugoslavia—are confronted at home by grave political and economic problems. Finally, the *status quo* alliances are subject to the uncertainties which threaten all political combinations. The French Socialists demand the abandonment of alliances with dictatorships, such as those of Poland and Yugoslavia, and oppose further financial support of these countries.⁶ At the same time Rumania and Yugoslavia, whose principal market is Germany, have shown a tendency to cooperate with the Reich in economic matters.

Aware of the weaknesses inherent in its alliances, France has sought to establish its security on a broader basis by clarifying or expanding the provisions of the League Covenant and the Kellogg pact directed against acts of aggression, and by urging that armed forces should be placed at the disposal of the League.⁷

THE DRIVE FOR TREATY REVISION

THE POLICY OF GERMANY

France's attempts to achieve security through a system of military alliances and to perpetuate the *status quo* within the framework of a more powerful League of Nations have been challenged with growing insistence by Germany, Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria, whose demands for treaty revision have been supported by Italy. Germany has sought to obtain revision first by *rapprochement* with the Soviet Union; next by reconciliation with the Allies; and more recently by threatening to denounce various provisions of the peace settlement unless its demands are promptly satisfied.

In the years immediately following the World War many Germans opposed all cooperation with the victorious powers, and sought to develop an Eastern orientation in foreign affairs, hoping to overthrow the peace settlement with the aid of the Soviet Union, which was then isolated from the capitalist world and, like Germany, excluded from the League of Nations. This phase of German foreign policy culminated in the conclusion of a treaty with the Soviet government at Rapallo in 1922. Another group, however, believed that cooperation with the Allies offered the best method of securing peaceful revision,⁸ and urged a Western orientation in foreign affairs and fulfilment of the Versailles Treaty. The objectives of this group found their fullest expression in the policy of Gustav Stresemann, German Foreign Minister from 1923 until his death in 1929.

Stresemann's efforts to reconcile Germany with France were welcomed by the French Foreign Minister, Aristide Briand. The principal achievement of the Stresemann-Briand collaboration was the conclusion of the five Locarno agreements on October 16, 1925. Four of these agreements provided that all disputes between Germany and its neighbors—Belgium, France, Poland and Czechoslovakia—should be submitted either to an arbitral tribunal or to the Permanent Court of International Justice. This provision, however, did not apply to disputes arising out of events prior to the Locarno agreements and "belonging to the past." The fifth—and most important—of the Locarno instruments was a treaty of mutual guarantee signed by Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain and Italy. The signatories "collectively and severally" guaranteed the maintenance and inviolability of the Belgian-German and Franco-German frontiers as fixed by the Versailles Treaty, and the demilitarization of the Rhineland. Germany, France and Belgium also agreed in no case to attack or invade each other except in "legitimate self-defense," in the event of a "flagrant breach" of the demilitarization formula, in fulfilment of the sanctions of Article XVI of the League Covenant, or as a result of League action against an aggressor state. Finally, the three countries undertook to settle by peaceful means "all questions of every kind which may arise between them."

7. Cf. Stone, "The World Disarmament Conference: Second Stage," cited, p. 274.

8. Cf. a letter from Gustav Stresemann, German Foreign Minister, to the German Crown Prince, September 7, 1925. Gustav Stresemann, *Vermächtnis* (Berlin, Ullstein, 1932, 3 volumes), Vol. II, p. 553.

9. For the texts of the Locarno agreements, cf. League of Nations, *Arbitration and Security*, C.653.M.216., Geneva, 1927, p. 405 et seq.

5. Valentine de Balla, *The New Balance of Power in Europe* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1932), p. 142.

6. Léon Blum, "Rien aux Tyrans ni aux Fauteurs de Guerre," *Le Populaire*, May 28, 1932; "Contre les Dictateurs et pour les Peuples," *ibid.*, May 29, 1932.

The mutual guarantee treaty, however, did not apply to Germany's frontiers with Poland and Czechoslovakia; the absence of an Eastern Locarno, corresponding to that in the West, has caused grave concern to France and its Eastern European allies.

The Locarno agreements temporarily improved the European atmosphere. Germany was admitted to the League of Nations in 1926, and the Allied evacuation of the Rhineland was completed in 1930. German reparation, already modified by the Dawes plan in 1924, was further scaled down by the Young plan in 1929. No attempt, however, was made to meet Germany's demands for arms equality, territorial revision in Europe and the colonies, and revocation of the "war guilt" clause.

Failure to meet these demands encouraged the growth of nationalist sentiment in Germany, which found its most vigorous exponents in the National Socialist party led by Adolf Hitler. The National Socialists, who won their first important victory in the general elections of September 14, 1930, declared that the German people had been dishonored by the peace treaties and "enslaved" by the burden of reparation payments. The program of the National Socialists, first formulated in 1920, denounced the Versailles and Saint-Germain treaties as intolerable, demanded their abrogation, and called for Austro-German union, development of a "people's army" and return of the colonies.¹⁰

Stresemann's successors—Dr. Curtius, Chancellor Brüning and Chancellor von Papen—attempted to meet some of the demands of the nationalists and to win concessions from the victorious powers by inaugurating a "policy of prestige," as contrasted with Stresemann's "policy of fulfillment." The first step in that direction—the Austro-German customs union of 1931—ended in failure.¹¹ The "policy of prestige," however, met with marked success at the Lausanne Reparation Conference in June-July 1932, which provided for a final German reparation payment of \$714,286,000, approximately 2.2 per cent of the Allied demands in 1921.¹² Germany also won an important concession on December 11, 1932 when Great Britain, France, Italy and the United States recognized its right to arms equality "in a system which would provide security for all nations."¹³

These concessions, made possible largely by the conciliatory spirit of the Herriot gov-

ernment, have not yet satisfied Germany, which continues to demand Austro-German union, revocation of the "war guilt" clause, return of the Saar basin and the districts of Eupen and Malmédy, revision of its Eastern frontiers, reconsideration of the colonial settlement, and recognition of its right to rearm should the Disarmament Conference fail to disarm the victorious powers.¹⁴

ITALY AND TREATY REVISION

The success of Germany's campaign for treaty revision ultimately depends on the attitude of Italy, which at present occupies a key position in diplomatic negotiations. Italy not only desires revision of the peace settlement, but resents France's hegemony in Europe. Franco-Italian hostility has been embittered by failure to reach an agreement regarding various colonial disputes, by Italy's demand for naval parity with France, by French disapproval of Italian Fascism, and by the struggle of the two countries to establish rival systems of alliances in Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

Despite the fact that, at the Paris Peace Conference, Italy secured practically all the territories which it had demanded in Europe, it regards the Versailles Treaty as unsatisfactory because it failed to obtain any substantial increase of its African possessions. Article 13 of the Treaty of London, under which Italy entered the World War at the side of the Allies, provided that, if Great Britain and France should increase their colonial territories in Africa at Germany's expense, Italy might claim "equitable compensation" with respect to the settlement of the frontiers of its colonies—Eritrea, Somaliland and Libya. By the Bonin-Pichon agreement of September 12, 1919 France rectified the western frontier of Libya and adjusted two controversial points with regard to the status of Italians in Tunis. Great Britain, by an agreement concluded on July 25, 1924, ceded Jubaland and Kismayou to Italy.

This colonial settlement, which both France and Great Britain regard as final, is viewed in Italy as but partial fulfillment of the Treaty of London. Great Britain, it is conceded, has fulfilled its colonial obligations "not magnificently, indeed, but sufficiently."¹⁵ France's concessions, however, are regarded as in no way commensurate with the sacrifices which Italy made during the World War, especially when compared with the territory which France acquired in Africa at Germany's expense. Italy consequently demands that France comply with Article 13 by ceding the Libyan hinterland and the port

10. Cf. Alfred Rosenberg, *Wesen, Grundsätze und Ziele der N.S.D.A.P. Das Programm der Bewegung erweitert durch das Agrarprogramm* (Munich, Deutscher Volksverlag, 1930).

11. Cf. Vera M. Dean, "Austria: The Paralysis of a Nation," *Foreign Policy Reports*, Vol. VIII, No. 22, January 4, 1933.

12. Wertheimer, "The Lausanne Reparation Settlement," cited.

13. Stone, "The World Disarmament Conference: Second Stage," cited.

14. For detailed discussion of German demands for treaty revision, cf. Mildred S. Wertheimer, "Revision of the Versailles Treaty," *Foreign Policy Association, Information Service*, Vol. V, No. 8, June 26, 1929.

15. Virginio Gayda, "Le Due Questioni: la Tunisi e la Coloniale," *Giornale d'Italia*, August 14, 1928.

of Djibouti in French Somaliland. France contends that such cessions of territory would endanger the unity of its African empire and would merely whet, but never satisfy, the colonial appetites of Fascist Italy.¹⁶

Another Franco-Italian controversy in Africa concerns the status of some 90,000 Italians who have settled in the French protectorate of Tunis. The French government is determined to assimilate these Italians by means of gradual naturalization or, failing this, to neutralize Italian influence in Tunis by increasing the numbers and improving the position of the French colonists. The Italians, however, resist all discriminatory measures, and are determined to retain their nationality, language and traditions—an attitude in which they are supported by the Mussolini government, which desires to create a colonial empire in Africa as an outlet for Italy's surplus population.¹⁷

Franco-Italian relations, envenomed by these colonial disputes, have been further strained by the inability of the two countries to reach an agreement regarding the size of their respective fleets at the London Naval Conference in 1930, where Italy demanded the right to build up to "parity" with France—a right which France refused to admit. Failure to adjust this conflict since 1930, despite the friendly mediation of Great Britain and the United States, has not only prevented the conclusion of a five-power naval limitation treaty, but threatens to disturb the three-power agreement reached in 1930 by the United States, Great Britain and Japan.¹⁸

Another source of friction, and one which seriously hampers all efforts at Franco-Italian reconciliation, is the tendency of the two countries to view each other with profound suspicion, and to engage in mutual recrimination. Italy claims that France has always treated it as a second-rate power, has taken every opportunity to humiliate it in international affairs, has underestimated its weight in European politics, and has blocked its development in Europe and the colonies.¹⁹ The Italians believe, moreover, that France has failed to recognize the important changes wrought by Fascism, has unjustifiably attacked Fascist aims and methods, and has attempted to undermine the Fascist system by giving aid and comfort to anti-Fascists who have taken refuge on French soil. The French, meanwhile, contend that Italy purposely misinterprets France's every move in

foreign affairs,²⁰ that it cherishes aggressive aims, and that the Fascist government is not averse to military adventures which might satisfy its territorial ambitions.

Franco-Italian hostility has been accentuated by the efforts of the two countries to establish rival systems of alliances in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. France's post-war friendship with Yugoslavia²¹ has seriously disturbed Italy, which fears a Yugoslav attack on its vulnerable Adriatic coast. The Italian press daily points out that King Alexander's dictatorial government, hard pressed by the internal conflict between Serbs and Croats and by the economic crisis, is a menace to European peace, and that it may at any moment provoke a conflict with Italy to forestall revolution at home.

To counterbalance French influence in Yugoslavia and the support which the Yugoslavs receive from their allies in the Little Entente—Czechoslovakia and Rumania—Italy has sought to cultivate close relations with Hungary and those of the Balkan powers which, for one reason or another, desire revision of the peace settlement. Hungary, which has waged an unremitting campaign for revision of the Trianon treaty, but fears Austro-German union if the peace settlement as a whole is revised, concluded a treaty of friendship with Italy in 1927, which it regards as the keystone of its foreign policy.²² The Hungarian Premier, General Julius Goemboes, who succeeded the Francophile Count Bethlen in October 1932, is a warm admirer of Italian Fascism and favors close cooperation with Italy.

Similar cordiality characterizes relations between Italy and Bulgaria, whose collaboration was sealed in 1931 by the marriage of Princess Giovanna, daughter of King Victor Emmanuel III, to King Boris of Bulgaria. Not only does Bulgaria, like Italy, consider the peace settlement unsatisfactory, but it shares Italy's fear of Yugoslav aggression. In 1928 Italy concluded treaties of friendship and neutrality with Turkey, which resents the demilitarization of the Straits, and with Greece. Italy's attempts to detach Rumania from the Little Entente by emphasizing their common Latin traditions have proved less successful. The Italo-Rumanian treaty of 1926 was prolonged in January 1933 for a six months' period only, and Rumania apparently declined to accept a provision for defensive alliance which Italy wished included in the treaty.

The most important move which Italy has made toward consolidating its influence in

16. For detailed discussion of Franco-Italian colonial problems, cf. Vera M. Dean, "France and Italy in the Mediterranean," *Foreign Policy Association, Information Service*, Vol. VI, No. 1, March 19, 1930.

17. *Ibid.*

18. For detailed discussion, cf. William T. Stone, "The Franco-Italian Naval Dispute," *Foreign Policy Reports*, Vol. VII, No. 8, June 24, 1931.

19. Cf. Robert Forges-Davanzati, "L'Italie et la France," *Nouvelle Revue de Hongrie*, April 1933, p. 347; "L'Errore della Francia," *Corriere della Sera*, March 5, 1933.

20. "Les Relations Franco-Italiennes," *Le Temps*, February 18, 1933.

21. Cf. p. 47.

22. Gustave Gratz, "La Hongrie et ses Voisins," *Nouvelle Revue de Hongrie*, April 1933, p. 330, 333.

the Balkans is the control it has established over Albania. This control, inaugurated in 1925 when King Zogu of Albania, failing to obtain financial assistance from the League of Nations, concluded a convention with an Italian financial group, was strengthened by a treaty of alliance in 1927 and a loan agreement in 1931. By the 1931 agreement Italy undertook to make a series of annual advances to Albania extending over a period of ten years and totaling some twenty million dollars. A notable feature of this agreement was that no interest was to be charged, and no definite date was set for repayment.

HITLERITE VICTORY UPSETS EUROPE

THE HIRTENBERG ARMS AFFAIR

The rapid rise of German nationalism, and the growth of revisionist sentiment in Germany, Italy and Hungary, have created a painful impression in France, which believes that at the Lausanne Reparation Conference it went a long way to meet German demands, and have alarmed Poland and the Little Entente. The high degree of European tension and the possible diplomatic alignment which a crisis might produce were clearly demonstrated by the Hirtenberg arms affair. On January 8, 1933 *Die Arbeiter-Zeitung*, organ of the Austrian Socialist party, revealed that some 60,000 rifles and 200 machine guns had been shipped on December 30 from Italy to the Hirtenberg arms factory in Austria, half of which had since been forwarded to Hungary. This revelation provoked consternation among the Little Entente states, which demanded that the case be brought before the League Council on the ground that Austria had violated Article 134 of the Saint-Germain treaty, which prohibits the importation into Austria of arms, munitions and war material of all kinds.

Of the various interpretations placed on the Hirtenberg affair by the French and Little Entente press, the one which gained widest circulation was that Italy had intended to arm the Austrian *Heimwehr*²³ and the Hungarian Fascists, and thus form a united Fascist front for an attack on the peace treaties in general, and Yugoslavia in particular. When France and Great Britain pressed for information, however, the Austrian Chancellor, Engelbert Dollfuss, replied on February 2 that the Hirtenberg arms had been sent to Austria by a private Italian firm for repairs, and would be returned to Italy as soon as repairs had been completed. This version

Italy's financial aid to Albania has been accompanied by the establishment of an Albanian National Bank controlled by Italian interests, the creation of an Italian company—the S.V.E.A.—for the development of various economic projects in Albania, and the appointment of a number of Italian civil and military advisers.²⁴ Yugoslavia regards Italy's growing influence in Albania as a menace to peace. The Italian government, however, argues that it must control Albania to prevent any other power from gaining a foothold which would threaten Italy's defense of its exposed Adriatic coast.

was corroborated by Italy, while Hungary denied all knowledge of the arms shipment.

The Little Entente refused to be satisfied with these explanations, and on February 8 M. Benes, Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia, demanded immediate investigation by either the League of Nations or the French and British governments. On February 11 France and Great Britain addressed a joint note to Austria, in which they asked that the arms be either returned to Italy or destroyed, and that a report of the action taken be presented by Austria within two weeks "under oath," threatening to withhold advances on the Lausanne loan²⁵ if Austria failed to comply with these terms. Chancellor Dollfuss was at first inclined to accede to the Franco-British demands. The Italian press, however, denounced the note as an "ultimatum," declared that France and Great Britain had treated Austria as a "vassal state," pointed out that the two powers had made no protest when Czechoslovak arms had crossed Austrian territory on the way to Yugoslavia, and concluded that the Hirtenberg affair had been exaggerated to mask the military preparations of the Little Entente against Italy.

Encouraged by Italy's sympathy, the Austrian government intimated on February 19 that it would reject the Franco-British demands. Great Britain and France hastened to assure Chancellor Dollfuss that they had not intended to deliver an ultimatum, but to make it possible for Austria to satisfy the wishes of the Little Entente without resort to the League Council. Their explanations apparently convinced Chancellor Dollfuss, who decided on February 21 not to give a formal answer to the Franco-British note, but promised that the arms would be returned to Italy; this solution was accepted by Great Britain and France, which regarded the incident as closed. The outcome of the

23. For detailed discussion, cf. Eugene Staley, "Italy's Financial Stake in Albania," *Foreign Policy Reports*, Vol. VIII, No. 7, June 8, 1932.

24. The Austrian *Heimwehr* is a reactionary bourgeois militia financed by big industry, commerce and banking, and is represented in Parliament by a political group known as the *Heimabund*. The Christian Socialist party which controls the Austrian Parliament has tolerated, if not actually supported, the activities of the *Heimwehr*. Cf. Dean, "Austria: The Paralysis of a Nation," cited, p. 265.

25. The Lausanne loan of \$42,000,000, approved by the League Council on July 15, 1932, was guaranteed by Great Britain, France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Holland and Switzerland. France and Great Britain each guaranteed \$14,000,000. Great Britain ratified the Lausanne loan on December 2, 1932, and France on December 30. For further details, cf. Dean, "Austria: The Paralysis of a Nation," cited.

affair was greeted in Italy as a triumph for Mussolini's foreign policy.²⁶

The Hirtenberg arms incident coincided with reports in the French press that Germany, Italy and Hungary had concluded a secret military alliance. On February 15 Premier Mussolini declared in the Council of Ministers that these reports were "pure inventions,"²⁷ and a similar denial was issued by Hungary. The Italian press, moreover, accused France of acting as an *agent provocateur*, and of conducting a campaign of calumny against Italy.

REACTION IN FRANCE

Alarmed by the series of nationalist incidents which began with Germany's demand for arms equality in the summer of 1932, France has sought to secure the collaboration of Great Britain, the Soviet Union and Italy against possible aggression by the defeated powers, while Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia have tried to strengthen their alliance by reorganization of the Little Entente.

France itself has little to fear from territorial revision in Europe, unless Germany should violate the Locarno agreement guaranteeing the Franco-German frontier. Such territorial losses as France would sustain would be limited for the most part to Africa, where it might eventually be forced to cede a portion of the former German colonies to Germany and Italy. All attempts at territorial revision, however, seriously threaten the present frontiers and—in the case of Poland and Czechoslovakia—the very existence of France's allies. France might conceivably be confronted with the alternative of standing by its allies and defying the drive for revision, or of sacrificing the interests of Poland and the Little Entente for the sake of collaboration with Great Britain, Italy and possibly Germany.

France, however, might find a third alternative: it might agree to a limited form of treaty revision under the objective procedure prescribed by Article XIX of the League Covenant, and at the same time establish collaboration with Great Britain and the United States for the maintenance of European peace. The possibility of Franco-British collaboration was revived at the Lausanne Reparation Conference of 1932, which was marked by the conclusion of an Anglo-French consultative pact concerning "methods for promoting future European cooperation." This pact stated that, in accordance with the spirit of the

League Covenant, the signatories "intend to exchange views with one another with complete candour concerning, and to keep each other mutually informed, of any questions coming to their notice similar to that now so happily settled at Lausanne which may affect the European régime."²⁸ This pact was hailed in France as a renewal of the *Entente Cordiale*. French enthusiasm, however, was somewhat dampened when fourteen other European states, including Germany, Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria, accepted an invitation to adhere to the Anglo-French pact.²⁹ Great Britain, nevertheless, acted in the spirit of an Anglo-French accord when it made common cause with France in the debt negotiations with the United States which preceded France's default on its December 15, 1932 payment, and when, in February 1933, it joined France in demanding from Austria an explanation regarding the Hirtenberg arms affair.

Attempts at Franco-Italian Reconciliation

Under M. Herriot's leadership, France also attempted to extend the olive branch to Italy. Speaking at the Toulouse Congress of the Radical Socialist party on November 5, 1932, M. Herriot declared that "nothing could be more painful than the persistence of a misunderstanding which might separate us from a people who fought at our side and toward whom we have not, perhaps, been always morally just." France, he added, "does not have to concern itself in its international negotiations with the internal régime of nations with which it is dealing."³⁰

The Italian press showed little warmth for France's overtures, arguing that M. Herriot's gesture of friendship was belated, and that France had as yet made no concrete proposals for the adjustment of Franco-Italian differences. Nor did the overthrow on December 14 of M. Herriot, who was succeeded as Premier by M. Paul-Boncour, personally unfriendly to Mussolini, serve to improve relations between the two countries. The Paul-Boncour government, however, attempted to hasten Franco-Italian understanding by appointing Henry de Jouvenel, a distinguished French statesman not unsympathetic to Fascism, as Ambassador to Rome. M. de Jouvenel was coolly received by Premier Mussolini, and found that the Fascist government was not eager to open negotiations. Italy's attitude disappointed France, and on February 3 M. Herriot declared that the only hope for peace lay in Italo-Yugoslav reconciliation.

26. Cf. speech by Flavio Suvich, Italian Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, in the Chamber of Deputies on February 24, 1933. *Corriere della Sera*, February 25, 1933.

27. *Ibid.*, February 16, 1933.

28. For the text of this pact, cf. *Further Documents relating to the Settlement reached at the Lausanne Conference* (London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1932), Cmd. 4129.

29. For detailed discussion, cf. Wertheimer, "The Lausanne Reparation Settlement," cited.

30. *Le Temps*, November 7, 1932.

Franco-Soviet Rapprochement

Perhaps the most notable effect of German nationalism on European diplomatic alignments is the impetus it has given to Franco-Soviet *rapprochement*. The Soviet Union has until recently regarded France as the stronghold of bourgeois capitalism, and the self-constituted leader of capitalist states united in the League of Nations for an attack on Communism; while France has shown little disposition to cultivate friendly relations with the Soviet Union. The Franco-Soviet debt negotiations of 1926 ended in failure, and in 1927 France obtained the recall of the Soviet Ambassador, Christian Rakovsky, on the ground that he had engaged in Communist propaganda. Franco-Soviet hostility reached a climax in October 1930 when the French government subjected Soviet goods to a system of licenses—a measure which immediately provoked Soviet trade reprisals.³¹

The accession to power in June 1932 of a Radical Socialist cabinet headed by M. Herriot, who had long favored Soviet *rapprochement*, marked a turning-point in Franco-Soviet relations: France apparently decided to establish closer relations with the Soviet Union as a counterweight to nationalist Germany. The Soviet Union, which could not remain indifferent to the anti-Marxist features of Hitler's program, welcomed France's overtures, and on November 29, 1932 the two countries signed a non-aggression pact which had been initialed in 1931, but held in abeyance pending the successful outcome of Soviet negotiations with Poland and Rumania for similar agreements.³²

The Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact provides that neither country will, under any circumstances, alone or with third powers, resort to war or any form of aggression against the other. If either is attacked by a third state, the other promises not to give direct or indirect assistance to the aggressor. Each party, moreover, agrees to refrain from any measure which would exclude the other from full participation in its foreign trade—thus preventing recurrence of the trade war which the two countries waged in 1930. Finally, each undertakes to abstain from interference in the other's internal affairs and from propaganda designed to change by force the political or social régime of any portion of the other's territory.

While the Franco-Soviet pact has been bitterly denounced by the nationalist press in France, French public opinion generally approves it on two grounds—that it assures Soviet neutrality in case of a German attack

on France, and that it opens up the Soviet market to French trade. A Franco-Soviet commercial treaty is now under discussion, and M. Herriot has even urged the conclusion of a Franco-Soviet alliance.³³

That Soviet collaboration may also prove valuable to France in future discussions of security, disarmament and treaty revision is indicated by the attitude of the Soviet government at the Disarmament Conference. On February 6, 1933, in a speech welcomed by the French delegation, M. Litvinov, Soviet Foreign Commissar, analyzing the Herriot disarmament plan, stated that France's demand for security had to be considered "with all seriousness," and offered a broad definition of the term "aggressor nation."³⁴ The Soviet press described M. Litvinov's speech as a "charter of people's rights to security and independence," declared that the Soviet Union supported "security for all peoples, which would open the way to a reduction of armaments"—thus apparently endorsing the French thesis that security must precede disarmament—and pointed out that territorial changes must be effected not by force, but by agreement.³⁵

Not only has France established close collaboration with the Soviet Union, but it has urged its allies, Poland and Rumania, to follow a similar course. Poland, which had already concluded a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union on July 25, 1932, ratified it on November 27. Ratification, however, was apparently due less to French influence than to fear that France might discontinue its military and financial support of Poland. Conclusion of a Soviet-Rumanian non-aggression pact has meanwhile been hampered by Bucharest's demand that the Soviet government recognize the occupation of Bessarabia, a Russian province which Rumania seized in 1918, and negotiations between the two countries were broken off on November 23, 1932. M. Titulescu, Rumanian Foreign Minister, is reported to fear that, once a Soviet-Rumanian non-aggression pact is concluded, France will use it as a pretext to give up all responsibility for protecting the Little Entente against treaty revision.³⁷

CONSOLIDATION OF THE LITTLE ENTENTE

Convinced that the victory of Hitlerism would hasten the formation of a revisionist bloc to which France might eventually be forced to make territorial concessions at the expense of its allies in Eastern Europe, the three Little Entente powers concluded a

31. Cf. Vera M. Dean, "Foreign Trade Policy of the Soviet Government," Foreign Policy Association, *Information Service*, Vol. VI, No. 20, December 16, 1930, p. 372.

32. For the text of this pact, cf. *L'Europe Nouvelle*, December 3, 1932, p. 1414. The pact went into effect on February 15, 1933.

33. *Journal de Genève*, March 18, 1933. Cf. also Louis Fischer, "Russia Looks for Friends," *The Nation*, March 20, 1933, p. 341.

34. For the text of M. Litvinov's speech, cf. *Soviet Union Review*, March 1933, p. 55.

35. *Izvestia*, February 8, 1933.

37. Cf. J. F. K., "La Roumanie, Centre d'Incertitude," *Nouvelle Revue de Hongrie*, April 1933, p. 407.

"pact of organization" at Geneva on February 16, 1933.³⁸ According to its preamble, this pact is designed to maintain and organize peace, to strengthen the economic ties of the Little Entente with other states, and to assure the stabilization of Central Europe; these objectives are to be achieved by complete unification of the policies of the three signatories, and the consequent creation of a "higher international entity," membership in which will be open to other states. The pact establishes a permanent council, composed of the foreign ministers of the three powers, which is to meet three times a year—once at Geneva during the annual League of Nations Assembly—and a permanent secretariat, one section of which is to function in Geneva. This council will direct the foreign policy of the Little Entente, and must unanimously approve all important treaties concluded by member states. Existing agreements between the Little Entente powers and other countries are meanwhile to be unified as much as possible, and the bilateral alliances which form the basis of the Little Entente³⁹ are to be prolonged for an indefinite period and brought together in a collective instrument. The pact also sets up a council which is to coordinate the economic interests of the three states. The consolidation of the three Little Entente powers, which together have a population of about 47,000,000, provoked serious repercussions throughout Europe. The new pact was hailed in France as a sound attempt at self-help by a group of states which might eventually become the nucleus of a Danubian federation.⁴⁰ In Italy, Germany and Hungary, however, the pact was denounced on the ground that it had been inspired solely by France; that it represented a return to pre-war diplomacy and the pre-war system of rival blocs which the League of Nations was supposed to have brought to an end;⁴¹ and that it would merely serve to increase political tension. The Italian press reported that the pact contained secret military provisions directed primarily against Italy and Hungary, and on February 24 Flavio Suvich, Italian Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, declared in the Chamber of Deputies that judgment regarding the pact had to be suspended until "all the clauses of a military character which undoubtedly accompany it" had been revealed.⁴² At the same time both Italy and Germany prophesied that the reorganized Little Entente would prove essentially weak, since two of

its members—Rumania and Yugoslavia—are faced by serious internal difficulties.^{42a}

The Little Entente representatives at Geneva, in a letter of March 1 circulated to members of the League, stated that the military provisions reported in the press were "absolute fabrications."⁴³ On the same day M. Benes, Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, declared in the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Czechoslovak Parliament that the Little Entente powers relied entirely on their own resources, and that France had taken no part in the preparation of the new pact. This pact, he added, would never be directed against any power, least of all Italy. On the contrary, it would serve as an instrument of peace. Finally, M. Benes indicated that the Little Entente states would resist coercion by the great powers, when he said that "the old dreams of Pangermanism or Panslavism, as well as the new chimeras of French or Italian hegemony in Central Europe and the Balkans belong to the past."⁴⁴

THE MUSSOLINI PLAN

Disturbed by the threatened collapse of the Disarmament Conference and by the critical nature of European relations, Premier MacDonald of Great Britain presented a new disarmament plan on March 16; the most notable feature of this plan is that it proposes a definite numerical equality for the leading armies of Continental Europe.⁴⁵ Recognizing that the adoption of this plan depends on a tangible improvement of the European political situation, Mr. MacDonald, after conferring with Premier Daladier of France at Geneva, paid a weekend visit to Rome. The ostensible purpose of this visit was to obtain Italy's support for the British arms proposal, and urge Premier Mussolini to restrain the Hitler government from rash action. The Italian press, however, declared that the principal task of the two Premiers was to combat "policies of military alliances" and to revise existing treaties "according to justice."⁴⁶

In the course of the Rome conversations, Premier Mussolini apparently took the initiative in advancing a plan for peace, which was announced in a communiqué of March 19.⁴⁷ According to available information, the Mussolini plan provides for a ten-year pact in which Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy would jointly undertake to work for European reconstruction, would affirm the

38. For the text of this pact, cf. *L'Europe Nouvelle*, March 4, 1933, p. 215.

39. Cf. p. 47.

40. "Une Nouvelle Communauté Internationale: la Petite-Entente Organisée," *L'Europe Nouvelle*, February 25, 1933, p. 170; cf. also "Le Pacte de la Petite-Entente," *Le Temps*, February 17, 1933.

41. "Costruttori e Distruttori," *Corriere della Sera*, February 26, 1933; "Contraddizioni," *ibid.*, March 3, 1933.

42. *Ibid.*, February 25, 1933.

42a. Benito Mussolini, "La Piccola Intesa," *Corriere della Sera*, April 13, 1933.

43. League of Nations, C.161.M.80.1933, Geneva, March 2, 1933.

44. "M. Benes et le Pacte de la Petite-Entente," *Le Temps*, March 3, 1933; *Corriere della Sera*, March 3, 1933; "The Little Entente and the Great Powers," *The Central European Observer*, March 17, 1933, p. 93.

45. For a summary of the MacDonald disarmament plan, cf. *New York Times*, March 17, 1933. This plan may be discussed in another issue of *Foreign Policy Reports*.

46. *Ibid.*, March 17, 1933.

47. *Ibid.*, March 20, 1933.

principle of treaty revision in conformity with the League Covenant in all cases liable to cause European conflicts, and would agree that, if the Disarmament Conference achieves only partial results, Germany's right to equality of armaments will gradually become effective.⁴⁸ In a somewhat ambiguous statement on March 20, Mr. MacDonald indicated that other powers would be invited to adhere to the proposed pact which, he said, provides for an "agreed," not an "imposed," peace. Italy, however, apparently intends to limit participation in the pact to the original "big four." The principal achievement of the Mussolini plan, according to the Italian press, is that it at last brings the sore problem of treaty revision to a head. Under this plan, moreover, the Italians believe that Great Britain and Italy—the two neutral guarantors of the Locarno agreements—acting as "honest brokers," may succeed in formulating a procedure by which the fundamental differences between France and Germany could be peacefully adjusted.

The French cabinet, although determined to resist any sabotage of the League, was not prepared to reject the Mussolini plan without serious consideration. A communiqué issued on March 21 following a conference between the French and British Premiers, stated that France would welcome the "confident cooperation" of the four great powers "within the framework of the League of Nations,"⁴⁹ and at a meeting of the French cabinet on March 29 it was agreed to accept the Mussolini plan, subject to further study of its possibilities.

Poland and the Little Entente, however, expressed vigorous opposition to the Mussolini plan, declaring that its adoption would substitute a dictatorship of the "big four" for the democratic procedure of the League, where all states, big and small, are represented on an equal basis. M. Titulescu, Rumanian Foreign Minister, went to Paris as spokesman for the Little Entente, and was assured on March 30 that France would not abandon its Eastern European allies. Meanwhile M. de Jouvenel, French Ambassador to Italy, returned from Rome, and urged the French cabinet to accept the Mussolini plan as the only alternative to forcible treaty revision. Premier MacDonald, moreover, attempted to calm the fears of the Little Entente, by declaring in the House of Commons on March 23 that small states would be consulted, and added two warnings—that summary rejection of the Mussolini plan would be unpardonable, and that states which would benefit most from treaty revision must give substantial proof of the sincerity of their cooperation in the cause of peace.⁵⁰

In a general statement on French foreign policy which he made in the Chamber of Deputies on April 6, Premier Daladier declared that France wished to collaborate with Great Britain and Italy in any constructive program which they might propose. France, he added, agrees that no treaty is eternal, but wishes to find a pacific procedure of revision which would have the consent of the interested states, and is ready to reduce armaments progressively, on condition that no state would attempt to re-arm.⁵¹ The Chamber backed M. Daladier's foreign policy by the impressive majority of 421 against 106.

The French reply to the MacDonald and Mussolini proposals, delivered on April 11, attempted to establish a basis for collaboration with Great Britain and Italy, while safeguarding the interests of Poland and the Little Entente, as well as the prestige of the League of Nations. According to available information, France declared that it was ready to accept the Mussolini plan subject to several important conditions. Among them were the provision that all action taken by the "big four" should be within the framework of the League; that any outside power directly interested in the plans of the "big four" should be invited to participate in the discussions from the start; that no re-armament should take place in Europe; and that Great Britain and Italy should furnish additional details regarding the nature and extent of proposed treaty revision. Most important of all was the demand that Article XIX of the League Covenant dealing with treaty revision should be applied only in connection with other Covenant articles. Italy has offered no official comment regarding these French reservations, and discussion of the Mussolini plan has since been overshadowed by the negotiations of the principal European powers with the United States.

The Hitler government has meanwhile welcomed the Mussolini plan as the method best calculated to solve European problems. In his address to the Reichstag on March 23, Chancellor Hitler said that the German people want to be at peace with the world, and that his government is willing to effect "honest reconciliation" with every state which is ready to "draw a line through the sad past." He deplored the failure of the Disarmament Conference to frame a definite agreement, but added that Germany sincerely desires to refrain from re-arming provided that other states at last show "an inclination to disarm radically." While refusing to accept the division of states into two categories—victors and vanquished—he asserted that adjustment of Franco-German relations would be possible if both countries tackled

48. Leland Stowe, *New York Herald Tribune*, March 31, 1933; *Le Temps*, April 1, 1933.

49. *New York Times*, March 22, 1933.

50. *The Times* (London), March 24, 1933.

51. *Le Temps*, April 8, 1933.

their problems in a far-sighted manner. Finally, he expressed the hope that similarity of ideals would furnish a basis for closer collaboration between Germany and Italy.⁵²

Germany's first step toward *rapprochement* with Italy was taken during the week of April 9, when Vice Chancellor von Papen and Hermann Goering, Reich Minister without portfolio, visited Rome, where they called on both Premier Mussolini and Pope Pius XI. The Mussolini government, however, while welcoming the advent of Hitlerism as a sign that Europe has at last realized the advantages of Fascism, has shown little eagerness to conclude any political agreements with Germany. Although Italy desires revision of the colonial settlement—which it can obtain only through concessions by Great Britain and France—it opposes Austro-German union, which might threaten its possession of the South Tyrol. Many observers consequently believe that, while Italy is ready to maintain friendly relations with Germany, it will avoid any commitments which might bar collaboration with Great Britain and France in a larger concert of powers.

TREATY REVISION: PEACE OR WAR?

The real issue at stake in these negotiations is not whether the peace treaties should be revised, but whether revision is to be effected by peaceful means or by resort to force. It is increasingly recognized that the peace settlement of 1919 cannot be regarded as permanent, and that it must sooner or later undergo revision. Premier Daladier has acknowledged that no treaty is eternal. Premier Mussolini has declared that "in ten years, Europe will be modified,"⁵³ and Premier MacDonald has asserted that "it is ridiculous to think that any nation can remain bound by obligations which it considers inconsistent with its honor."⁵⁴ The questions on which an agreement remains to be reached are the appropriate time for territorial revision, and the methods by which revision is to be effected.

Discussion of territorial revision at a moment when nationalism holds sway in Germany is regarded as inopportune not only in France, but in Great Britain, where Tories, Liberals and Laborites have joined in questioning the timeliness of the Mussolini plan. Speaking in the House of Commons on April 13, Sir Austen Chamberlain, former British Secretary for Foreign Affairs, declared that recent events in Germany seem "to render this a singularly inopportune moment to talk about revision of the treaties."⁵⁵ Premier

MacDonald, while agreeing that the victory of Hitlerism has "enormously increased the risk" of treaty revision, contends that the Mussolini plan at least provides a transition period during which revision may peacefully be discussed, and during which Germany will abstain from re-armament.⁵⁶

The methods by which revision is to be effected may also be expected to create wide divergence of opinion. Article XIX of the League Covenant provides that the League Assembly "may from time to time advise the reconsideration by Members of the League of treaties which have become inapplicable and the consideration of international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world." This article, which has been invoked only twice—by Peru and Bolivia, both in 1920—offers Germany and its former allies a legal basis for a demand that the peace treaties be "reconsidered." Since the Assembly, under Article XIX, is directed merely to "advise," some authorities hold that it could act on requests for treaty revision by majority vote; such a procedure would prevent the interested parties—France, Poland and the Little Entente—from blocking a move for revision. Other authorities, however, assert that the Assembly's decisions in such cases must be unanimous, thus giving the *status quo* powers an opportunity to block revision indefinitely.⁵⁷

The Mussolini plan, by creating a four-power concert, might deprive the Assembly, in which the small states are represented, of the right to pass on demands for treaty revision and entrust final decision to the "big four." This feature of the plan, which implies return to the methods of pre-war secret diplomacy, is particularly disquieting to the *status quo* countries. France, the principal stronghold of democracy in Europe, fears that in a concert dominated by two Fascist states, it would not only be isolated from its Eastern European allies, but would lose all opportunity for independent collaboration with Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Poland and the Little Entente, meanwhile, oppose any attempt of the great powers to dictate a European settlement outside the League. In their demand for preservation of the League they enjoy the support of other small European states, notably Spain and the Scandinavian countries. The negotiations precipitated by the growing demand for territorial revision may thus not only lead to political realignments in Europe, but may develop into a conflict between great and small states, in which the very existence of international organization, as represented by the League, will be at stake.

52. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, March 24, 1933.

53. Speech at Turin, October 25, 1932. *Corriere della Sera*, October 26, 1932.

54. Speech in the British House of Commons, March 23, 1933. *The Times* (London), March 24, 1933.

55. *New York Times*, April 14, 1933.

56. Speech in the House of Commons, March 23, 1933, cited.

57. For further discussion of Article XIX, cf. Wertheimer, "Revision of the Versailles Treaty," cited.